

# Free Palestine

From the narrow window of my  
small cell,  
I see trees that are smiling at me  
And rooftops crowded with my  
family.  
And windows weeping and  
praying for me.  
From the narrow window of my  
small cell—  
I can see your big cell!

*-End of a talk with a Jailor*

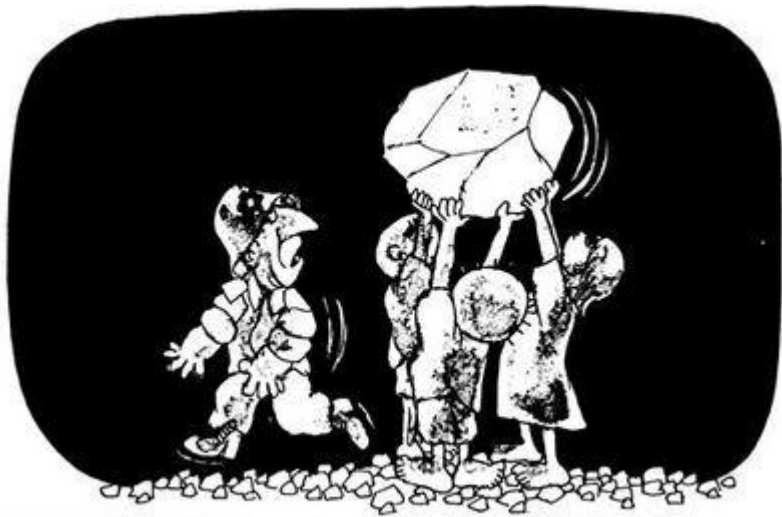


day as that of the Andalusian poet Federico Garcia Lorca. But, because, like Lorca, he wrote about what he lived for and his writings infused his life with the struggle for the freedom of Palestine which makes him a true peoples' poet.

**Samih's conviction about the freedom of Palestine and people** around the world remained unshaken even when he was viciously targeted and imprisoned several times for his poetry by the Israeli authorities. It started in 1960 when he refused to enlist in the Israeli army which all Israelis have to compulsorily partake in. He was also under house arrest. He joined the Israeli Communist party, Hadash, in 1967 and was detained along with the other members of the party at the outbreak of the Six-Day War. He was then sent to al-Damoun prison in Haifa. In spite of these years in prison, severe surveillance and extreme torture, his spirit of freedom and resistance could never be crushed. His writings still continue to speak for a world where 'Palestinian people will be free...Arab world will be united...social justice will be victorious in the world.'

**Al-Qasim may have died, but in every fist that rises in resistance and the rebellion of the people of Gaza, in every smile and dream of Palestinian children, Samih's poetry will breathe and live, raising the slogan that Gaza will be free.** Today, when Gaze continues to be bombarded with missiles and every street and house is rising in flames, this tempestuous history of massacre and refugee camps that are engraved in the memories of Palestinians would turn into a whopping storm thundering in a new dawn for a free Palestine that peoples' writers like Qasim unyieldingly struggled for.

## Revolutionary Cultural Front



**You may take the last strip of my land,  
Feed my youth to prison cells.  
You may plunder my heritage.  
You may burn my books, my poems  
Or feed my flesh to the dogs.  
You may spread a web of terror  
On the roofs of my village,  
O enemy of the sun  
But  
I shall not compromise  
and to the last pulse  
in my veins I shall  
resist.**

*—Enemy of the sun*

# Samih Al-Qasim

When Gaza is fighting yet another brutal offence of Israeli imperialist occupation, its poet of resistance Samih Al-Qasim died on 19<sup>th</sup> August, in Rameh, Israel, of cancer.

Sahim Al-Qasim was not born when he was born. It was the atrocities confronted by an occupied state that gave birth to the poet, Sahim Al-Qasim. It was the memories of Nakba-the occupation, expulsion and ethnic cleansing of more than 7 lack Palestinians from Palestine by Israel that gave birth to him. He recalls: 'I regard that date as the date of my birth, because the first images I can remember are of the 1948 events. My thoughts and images spring from November 48.'

And with him was born a poet who was to be known as the 'Resistance Poet' all over the world. Al Qasim took an interest in poetry from an early age. Battling against the strict decrees of a military government, Qasim became deeply involved in political activism, which thunderously resounds in his poetry. Living in Israel, he wrote poems that became anthems of the heroic Palestinian resistance and strived forth uncompromisingly with his undaunted condemnation of the oppressive Israeli state. A beacon among peoples' poets, he powerfully strung together the narrative of collective history, memory and relentless dreams of the people of Palestine which mobilized and enflamed the Palestinian resistance into collective action. He consistently invoked the unflinching struggles of the martyrs of Palestine in his poetry which remains a defiant testimony to a free Palestinian land and its geography which Israeli forces have forcibly occupied and continue to wipe out. Along with Mahmoud Darwish and Tawfiq Ziad, he laboriously built what we know as the Palestinian identity. People call him the 'Lorca of the Arab', not because he died on the same